



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
FEBRUARY 6, 2024, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watford called the regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on February 6, 2024, at 6:05 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast (SE) 3rd Avenue (AVE), Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. A moment of silence was held in memory of Public Works Director David Allen who passed away on February 1, 2024. The invocation was offered by Mayor Watford; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Chandler.

II. ATTENDANCE

City Clerk Lane Gamiotea called the roll. Members present to establish a quorum: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Vice Mayor Monica M. Clark, and Council Members Noel A. Chandler, and Robert "Bob" Jarriel. Council Member David R. McAuley was absent with consent.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. Modifications to the agenda were as follows: The exhibit for New Business item B., was posted earlier today and will be identified in the Minute File as Exhibit 12; remove New Business item G., and add New Business item H., Exhibit 11.
- B. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Chandler to adopt the agenda as amended.
Motion Carried.
- C. There were no comment cards submitted for public participation for issues not on the agenda.

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Police Lieutenant Belen Reyna was recognized by Mayor Watford and Chief Hagan for his years of service. He was presented with a monetary award of \$250.00 and a framed Certificate of Appreciation, read into the record as follows: **"Longevity Service Certificate presented to Belen Reyna in recognition of your 20 Years of service, hard work, and dedication to the City, its citizens, and your fellow employees from February 9, 2004, through February 9, 2024."**
- B. Local students, Luke Larson, Lilly Maxwell, and Tess D'Ariano were recognized for receiving a South Florida Fair Scholarship. Miss Paisley Norman, who also received a scholarship, was unable to be in attendance.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to:
- A. Dispense with the reading and approve the Minutes for January 16, 2024, [as presented in **Exhibit 1**]; and
 - B. Temporarily close a portion of SE 2nd AVE between SE 6th and 7th Streets (ST) from 8:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. on March 8, 2024, for a field day, submitted by Okeechobee Christian Academy [as presented in **Exhibit 2**]; and
 - C. Temporarily close a portion of Southwest 2nd, 3rd, and 4th AVEs between North and South Park STs from 5:00 P.M. on March 8, 2024, to 6:00 P.M. on March 10, 2024, for the Speckled Perch Festival, submitted by Okeechobee Main Street [as presented in **Exhibit 3**]; and
 - D. Approve the sale of Police vehicles through Insight Auctioneers [as presented in **Exhibit 4**].
Motion Carried.

VI. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR ORDINANCE ADOPTION AT 6:23 P.M.

- A. Motion by Vice Mayor Clark, second by Council Member Chandler to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1284, amending the Optional Forms of Benefits for the General Employees Retirement System [as presented in **Exhibit 5**].
Motion Carried.

City Attorney John Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1284 as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE FURTHER AMENDING THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE GENERAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM, RESTATED PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE 1141; AMENDING SECTION 10, OPTIONAL FORMS OF BENEFITS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

VI. PUBLIC HEARING FOR ORDINANCE ADOPTION CONTINUED

- A. Continued. Motion by Vice Mayor Clark, second by Council Member Jarriel to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1284. Mayor Watford opened the floor for public comments, there were none. Finance Director, India Riedel and Mr. Scott Baur of Resource Centers, LLC, the Pension Plans' Administrator, gave the staff review. City Clerk Gamiotea noted for the record, the Ordinance and Actuary Impact Statement was sent to the State Division of Retirement for review and no comments were received. **Roll Call Vote: Chandler-Yea, Clark-Yea, Jarriel-Yea, McAuley-Absent, Watford-Yea.**
Motion Carried.

- B. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, second by Vice Mayor Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1285 amending Section 2-131 of the Code of Ordinances removing the Personnel Administrator duties from the City Clerk [as presented in **Exhibit 6**].
Motion Carried.

City Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1285 as follows: "**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 2 ADMINISTRATION, ARTICLE III DEPARTMENTS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES, DIVISION 4 CITY CLERK, SECTION 2-131 GENERAL DUTIES TO REMOVE THE DUTY OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**"

Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1285. Mayor Watford opened the floor for public comments, there were none. Clerk Gamiotea gave the staff review. **Roll Call Vote: Chandler-Yea, Clark-Yea, Jarriel-Yea, McAuley-Absent, Watford-Yea.**
Motion Carried.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Motion by Vice Mayor Clark, second by Council Member Jarriel to approve the designation of India Riedel as the City's Representative and Board Member and Heather Prince as Alternate to the Public Risk Management Group Health Trust.
Motion Carried.

- B. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, second by Vice Mayor Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1286, merging the Police Officers' and Firefighters' Pension Funds and providing for a retired firefighter medical stipend [as presented in **Exhibit 12**].
Motion Carried.

City Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1286 as follows: "**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR THE MERGER OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE MUNICIPAL POLICE OFFICERS' PENSION TRUST FUND, CREATED PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 888 AS SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED, AND THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE MUNICIPAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION FUND, CREATED PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 889 AND AMENDED AND RESTATED PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 1229; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY OF PROVISIONS; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HERewith AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**"

Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to approve the first reading and set March 5, 2024, as the final Public Hearing date for proposed Ordinance No. 1286.

Clerk Gamiotea distributed a memorandum requesting the Council correct some of the wording within the proposed Ordinance. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, second by Vice Mayor Clark to amend proposed Ordinance No. 1286, as follows: remove the sixth Whereas paragraph on page 1; remove elected and replace with other on page 3, first paragraph, B., last sentence; add "in the System" after the word remaining on page 3, fourth paragraph, first sentence; remove elected and replace with other on page 5, fifth paragraph, 6.B., last sentence; add "in the System" after the word remaining on page 5, last paragraph, first sentence.

Motion To Amend Carried.

Mr. Baur, Plan Administrator, provided the staff review, purpose and benefits of the proposed changes. The Police Officers' Board of Trustees voted against recommending adoption. However, the Firefighters' Board of Trustees voted in favor of the adoption. **Roll Call Vote: Chandler-Yea, Clark-Yea, Jarriel-Yea, McAuley-Absent, Watford-Yea.**
Motion Carried As Amended.

VII. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- C. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, second by Vice Mayor Clark to approve the amendments to the Personnel Policies and Procedures related to transferring personnel duties from the Finance Department and City Clerk's Office to Human Resources staff within the Administration Department and revising the Education Reimbursement Policy to coordinate with the Education Reimbursement Agreement as amended by the City Council on February 2, 2022, [as presented in **Exhibit 7**].
Motion Carried.

- D. Motion by Council Member Chandler, second by Vice Mayor Clark to adopt proposed Resolution No. 2024-01, amending the duties of the City Clerk in previously adopted Resolution No. 2022-11 [as presented in **Exhibit 8**].

Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Resolution No. 2024-01 as follows: **"A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE SUMMARY OF DUTIES FOR THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK AS PROVIDED IN SECTION THREE OF RESOLUTION NO. 2022-11, TRANSFERRING THE DUTY OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR TO HUMAN RESOURCES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**
Motion Carried.

- E. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to approve the Grant Agreement [No. HL208] with the State of Florida Department of Commerce in the amount of \$1,200,000.00 for City Hall Hardening [as presented in **Exhibit 9**].
Motion Carried.

- F. Over 30 years ago the City adopted a policy for presenting longevity service awards to be presented to employees on the anniversary date of employment at 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40 years. The flat rate amounts were included and have not been increased since adoption. Council Member Jarriel requested a discussion on this matter to consider either increasing the amounts or implementing a percentage of the employee salary so that the amounts would increase with costs of living. The policy is found in the Code of Ordinances, Section 2-91, and presented in **Exhibit 10. The consensus of the discussion was for staff to present an amendment changing the amounts from a flat rate to a percentage and the costs of making it effective October 1, 2023. The amendment will be presented at a future meeting and will require an ordinance to be adopted to amend the policy.**

- G. The discussion to raise the helicopter in Veterans Memorial Square was removed.

- H. Item Added: Motion by Council Member Chandler, second by Vice Mayor Clark to approve amending the positions on the salary, position, and job title page in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget, a. change Human Resources Director from (1) to (0); b. add Human Resources Generalist (1) with a minimum salary of \$47,991.00 and a midpoint salary of \$60,395.50; c. change Public Works Director from (1) to (0); d. change Lead Operator from (2) to (1); e. change Operations Supervisor (0) to Operations Supervisor II (0); f. add Operations Supervisor I (1) with a minimum salary of \$53,500.00 and a midpoint salary of \$64,925.06; g. add Contracts Manager (1) with a minimum salary of \$55,000.00 and a midpoint salary of \$64,746.57 [as presented in **Exhibit 11**].
Motion Carried.

VIII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Noted his support in hiring a Contracts Manager (see previous item), which could lead to future cost savings for the City.
- The Stormwater Ordinance No. 1275 is still pending, awaiting feedback from local engineers.
- Has been working on the Firefighter and Police Officer Pension Funds merger.
- The proposed Smoke-Free ordinance is being finalized to present for first reading soon.
- Working on a wage garnishment order.

IX. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- The final plat mylar is ready for signatures for Park Street Commerce Center.
- Still working on finalizing paperwork for Cattleman's Square grant reimbursement.
- Traveling with Council Member Chandler to Opa-Locka to tour the facilities of Advanced Medical Sanitations, a medical waste facility.

X. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler stated he had a cold and windy, but safe, trip to North Carolina.

Council Member Jarriel stated he was glad to be back and thanked the Council for recognizing the students.

Administrator Ritter reminded everyone about the funeral services for Public Works Director Allen on Saturday, February 10, 2024. The viewing will begin at 10:00 A.M. with the funeral following at 11:00 A.M., at Buxton-Bass Funeral Home.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of discussion, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:38 P.M.

Submitted By:



Lane Gamiotea, CMC, City Clerk

Please take notice and be advised that when a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, s/he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. City Clerk media are for the sole purpose of backup for official records of the Clerk.